

# **FACTS** about **Health Care for Recent Legal Immigrants**

---

**In 1997, Connecticut created the SMANC program to provide health care coverage for recent legal immigrants when the federal government would not.**

Under federal welfare reform passed in 1996, states are prohibited from using Medicaid funds for health care coverage to legal immigrants who have been in the country for less than 5 years. In 1997, Connecticut established a state-funded program (State Medical Assistance for Non-Citizens or SMANC) to provide health care for those recent immigrants.

**In 2009, the SMANC program was abolished by the legislature – but then reinstated as a result of a successful lawsuit.**

To save \$9.75 million, in 2009, the legislature abolished virtually all of the SMANC program. Health care coverage for recent legal immigrant children and pregnant women was continued under new eligibility rules in the Medicaid and SCHIP (HUSKY A and B) programs. Services to a few recipients of long-term care were continued through SMANC.

In December of 2009, a state trial court ruled that the state was required to continue to provide health care to recent legal immigrants. The trial court decision continuing the program was overturned by the Supreme Court in the spring of 2011.

**In July of 2011, the SMANC program was ended as a result of a state Supreme Court decision.**

The program is now closed and most recent legal immigrants are not eligible for state or federal health care programs. Coverage continues for children, pregnant women and a few long-term care recipients.

**About 4,500 adult immigrants who entered the country legally but have lived here for less than 5 years lost health care coverage.** Most of these 4,500 adult immigrants are the parents of children in HUSKY.

**IN 2012,  
THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE CAN RESTORE  
HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR RECENT LEGAL IMMIGRANTS.**